
Hotel Employees' Individual Characteristics and their Service Outcomes: The Critical Role of Polychronicity

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Abstarct:

Purpose: The aim of the study is to identify the importance of hotel employees' individual characteristics, namely polychronicity, for their critical attitudes and behaviors towards their service jobs. More specifically, this study develops and tests a research model that investigates the relationships between polychronicity and employees' personal accomplishments and analyzes its relationships with creativity and job performance. The person–job fit theory offers a rationale for developing the proposed relationships.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A survey instrument was used to collect data from selected hotels in Northern Poland. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling.

Findings: The results proved that polychronicity may be a significant predictor of employees' personal accomplishment that may exert a positive impact on employees' creativity and their job performance.

Practical Implications: This study offers several useful implications including implementation of adequate recruitment procedures, effective training programs and motivation to attract and retain valuable employees, predisposed to their service jobs and likely to deliver high quality service experience.

Originality/Value: The research value of this study may also result from the holistic approach undertaken towards the study concept, since the relationships proposed in this study have been combined within one conceptual model and analyzed simultaneously in the context of hotel employees in Poland, extending the study results to a new socio-cultural context of Central-East Europe.

Keywords: Hotel employees, polychronicity, personal accomplishment, creativity, job performance.

JEL codes: J20, J24, L83.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

In global competition, hospitality organizations realize that to survive and to succeed, it is essential to deliver service quality (Castro-Casal *et al.*, 2019), perceived as a crucial strategy to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty (Karatepe and Uludag, 2008a), and employees' interaction with customers is pivotal in this process (Alhelalat *et al.*, 2017). However, facing today's competition, organizations try to "do more with less" and expect employees' prompt responsiveness (Byrne and Canato, 2017, p. 104) and creativity while serving ever more demanding guests (Castro-Casal *et al.*, 2019; Hon *et al.*, 2013) who differ in their dynamic requirements (Lee *et al.*, 2016) and seek unique service experiences that offer wonderful and persistent memories (Wang *et al.*, 2017).

However, although hospitality frontline employees are among "the most critical elements of a firm's marketing strategy" (Babakus *et al.*, 2009, p. 480), and service quality heavily depends on their effectiveness in dealing with customers (Tsaur and Lin, 2004), they are particularly exposed to many stressful situations, due to the specific nature of their jobs (Hwang *et al.*, 2014), such as long working hours, heavy workloads, real time of serving, 24/7 customer contact, etc., (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013; Kim *et al.*, 2007; King and Garey, 1997). Moreover, they need to play multiple roles, engage in various interactions and work under rigorous time restrictions and deadlines (Arasli *et al.*, 2014; Jang and George, 2012; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013).

Thus, unsurprisingly, to remain satisfied in such a work environment, hotel employees need to possess adequate individual characteristics that would predispose them to perform their complex jobs effectively and enable them to cope successfully with a variety of their environmental challenges, experience less effort and greater enthusiasm, which characterizes individuals with a high degree of person–job fit (Chen *et al.*, 2014). If there is fit between employees and requirements of their frontline service jobs, such employees may feel comfortable and adequate at their workplace (Jang and George, 2012; Lee *et al.*, 2016). As indicated in Ghorbannejad and Esakhani's (2016) study, employees with certain individual characteristics are more likely than others to engage in their professional roles, they also have mastery that enables them to cope effectively with demanding work conditions (Karatepe and Aleshinloye, 2009) and may achieve better performance outcomes (Karatepe *et al.*, 2006).

Unfortunately, despite the fact that success of hotels mostly depends on its employees working effectively under the stress (Kim *et al.*, 2007), there has still been relatively little empirical research on the impact of individual characteristics on hotel employees' outcomes in their frontline service jobs (Grobelna, 2019; Karatepe *et al.*, 2006; 2013).

Therefore, the aim of the study is to identify the importance of hotel employees' individual characteristics, namely polychronicity, for their critical attitudes and

behaviors related to their service jobs. More specifically, this study investigates the relationships between polychronicity (PCH_Y) and employees' personal accomplishments (P_ACM) and analyzes its relationships with creativity (CR_Y) and job performance (J_P). The person–job (P–J) fit theory serves as a guiding framework offering a rationale for developing the proposed relationships.

The present study is relevant for at least several reasons. First, this study addresses polychronicity as a vital trait of hotel employees that needs investigation. This results from the fact that the challenges created by the work environment in the hospitality industry, including a high degree of daily service encounters with hotel guests (Lin *et al.*, 2014), need hotel employees who are able to engage in a number of tasks (Araslı *et al.*, 2014; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013) and can effectively do more than one thing within the given time frame. Thus it can be assumed that employees high in polychronicity, who can move freely between different tasks within the same time-block, can be much more successful in hospitality frontline jobs than those who prefer to complete one task before another and become disoriented if too many operations have to be done at once (Grobelna, 2019; Jang and George, 2012; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013).

However, although hospitality is a work environment where effective time use is vital and where the simultaneous management of multiple tasks is frequently required, there is paucity of studies on polychronicity in the hospitality management research (Araslı *et al.*, 2014). Polychronicity is a relatively new concept in the hospitality management research (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013) and has not been widely explored (Grobelna, 2019), therefore, it deserves greater empirical attention and gaining a richer understanding in the context of frontline service jobs in hospitality.

Second, as a result of the above, research examining the effects of polychronicity has also been limited in the hospitality management literature. However, exploring the impact of polychronicity on personal accomplishments as a one of the job burnout dimensions (Maslach and Jackson, 1981), seems to be of particular interest, especially that hotel employees are particularly prone to experience burnout (and Hassan, 2016).

However, although the concept of job burnout involves three sub constructs, i.e., emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishments, and each sub-dimension captures its unique aspect (Kim *et al.*, 2007), specifically, exhaustion, as a component the most identified with burnout (Kang *et al.*, 2010, p. 170) is its most widely reported and analyzed dimension (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Similarly, in the tourism and hospitality research, both emotional exhaustion and/or depersonalization get wide empirical attention (Chen and Chen, 2012; Chen and Kao, 2012; Chu *et al.*, 2012; Grobelna, 2018; Karatepe and Uludag, 2007; Lin *et al.*, 2014; Mansour and Tremblay, 2016). However, the third burnout dimension, personal accomplishment, seems to deserve it more, especially that it captures the unique aspect of job burnout referring to self-evaluation (Kim *et al.*, 2007). As literature underlines, it is difficult to recover a sense of success and dedication on the job when employees have already developed a sense of inefficacy (Kang *et al.*, 2010).

Third, both creativity and job performance have been chosen as critical employee's outcomes in this study, because they are vital for the organization's growth (Çekmecelioğlu and Günsel, 2011) and "critical success factors" for today's organizations (Hon, 2012, p. 130). Creativity can be defined as a production of ideas that are both new and useful (Amabile, 1997; Amabile, 1998; Hon, 2012) and concern products, services, processes and procedures (Shalley *et al.*, 2004). However, although creativity is essential in every organization (Sia and Appu, 2015) and valued across different tasks, occupations and industries (Shalley and Gilson, 2004), it is particularly needed in the hospitality setting that competes by continually improving the quality of its services (Chang and Teng, 2017; Hon *et al.*, 2013). Thus to meet these business challenges the hospitality industry should particularly focus on employee creativity (Chang and Teng, 2017; Hon *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, this topic should not be neglected in hospitality research and emphasis should be placed on obtaining more knowledge about conditions that may foster employees' creativity (Grobelna, 2015).

Similarly, given the fact that the hospitality industry is highly interactive (Li *et al.*, 2020) and hotel employees are particularly responsible for delivering high service quality (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013), it is still timely and significant to seek predictors of hotel employees' job performance, which is defined as "the level of productivity of an individual employee, relative his or her peers, on several job-related behaviors and outcomes" (Babin and Boles, 1998, p. 82). Frontline employees' performance plays a crucial role in creating memorable and friendly staying experience, which is the core of the hospitality (Wang *et al.*, 2017). There is no doubt that service quality enhanced by better service performance may help hotels to remain competitive (Tsauro and Lin, 2004), as it may leave a lasting impression that influences customers' satisfaction, loyalty and financial performance (Brown and Lam, 2008). Therefore, this study also addresses the need to seek effective ways of improving employees' job performance that plays a pivotal role in shaping guests' satisfactory service experience.

Based on the above, this study contributes to a better understanding of the relationships between hotel employees' individual characteristic, namely polychronicity, vital while performing under stressful and demanding working conditions, and its valued outcomes critical for satisfactory service experience. To the best of the author's knowledge, so far research has not investigated simultaneously the relationships among the proposed study constructs using data from contact hotel employees in Poland.

2. Literature Review

Although the hospitality industry focuses guests' satisfaction by providing them with excellent service – perfectly, every time – this seems to be a particularly difficult task (Walker, 2014) due to a highly stressful working environment which hospitality creates (Mohamed, 2015). Hotels operate 24/7 and require a substantial "face-time" between employees and guests (Zhao *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, on the one hand, high labor intensity (Choo, 2016; Teason, 2010) with strict time restrictions and

deadlines, and on the other hand, high employee turnover (Glińska-Noweś *et al.*, 2020; Haldorai *et al.*, 2019) lead to a significant increase in excessive workload for employees who, strongly over-stretched in understaffed situations, experience elevated levels of job stress.

However, it is underlined that hotel employees even working under the same conditions may experience different levels of job stress, which may result from differences in their individual characteristics (Mohamed, 2015). Both researchers and practitioners argue that employee's individual differences may influence their customer service attitudes, behaviors and overall performance, critical for service quality, customer satisfaction and whole organizational success (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). Personality traits concern consistent patterns in the way people feel, think and behave (Cervone and Pervin, 2015). These relatively enduring characteristics influence one's behavior across many situations (Stangor and Walinga, 2021).

Polychronicity can be defined as a tendency to keep several activities at the same time, "like jugglers" (Hall, 1990, p. 173). In contrast, people with monochronic personality can be described as those of low-involvement who schedule one activity at a time and become disoriented if too many things need to be done at once (Hall, 1990; Jang and George, 2012). Such employees find it is easier when activities can be separate, whereas those with polychronic personality have a tendency to collect them (Hall, 1990).

Therefore, given the boundary-spanning roles of contact hotel employees (Araslı *et al.*, 2014), who operate within work environment where effective time use is extremely valid, there is no doubt that they need special individual characteristics that enable them to cope effectively with high demands of their hospitality jobs, and let them function and perform optimally, achieving valued outcomes. In this light, polychronic individuals who value human relationships and interactions and have a natural tendency to do many things in a given time (Capdeferro *et al.*, 2014) may be well-suited to their highly interactive frontline jobs, when a variety of guests must be served, often in a strict time, and multiple tasks have to be done promptly.

The Person–Job (P–J) fit theory serves as a guiding framework offering a rationale for such reasoning. P–J fit is a type of Person–Environment (P–E) fit theory and is defined as the relationship between individual's characteristics and those of the job characteristics (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005). In other words, it refers to the level of compatibility that individuals have with their jobs (Jang and George, 2012). There are two basic conceptualizations of P–J fit (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005), demands–abilities fit, where individuals' abilities/skills/ knowledge converge with what their job requires, and needs–supplies fit, when employee's needs/desires are fulfilled by their job. It is important that organizations understand P–J fit, because it may predict important employees' outcomes. Prior studies have reported a positive impact of P–J fit on job satisfaction and organizational commitment and a negative one on the

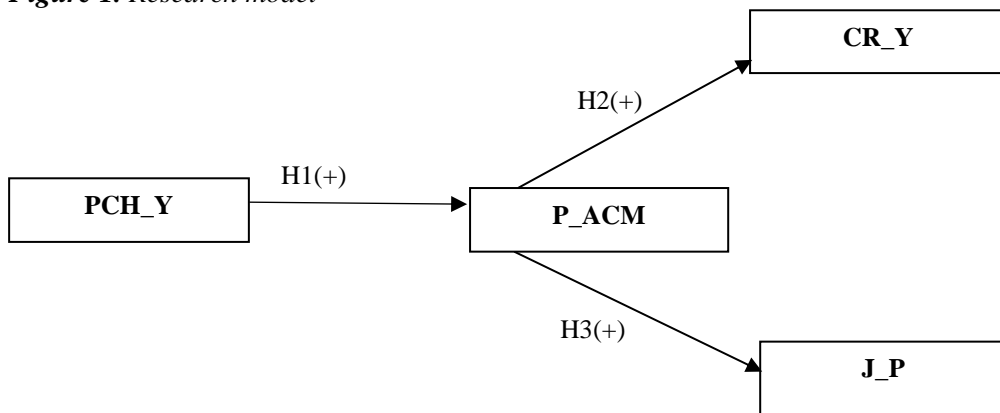
intention to quit (Babakus *et al.*, 2011; Hambleton *et al.*, 2000; Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005; Lauver and Kristof-Brown, 2001) and burnout (Babakus *et al.*, 2011).

Given the hospitality context, in a study by Chen *et al.* (2014) among front-line hotel employees in Taiwan, it was proved that individuals with a better P–J fit are more job-engaged. Specifically, as confirmed in research by Wu *et al.* (2020) conducted among restaurant employees in China, person–job polychronicity fit would show a significant positive relationship with employees’ well-being in their work environments. Thus, not surprisingly, polychronic employees may also display other positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes in their hospitality service jobs, such as increased work engagement (Grobelna, 2019; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013), job satisfaction (Jang and George, 2012) and decreased turnover intention (Asghar *et al.*, 2020; Jang and George, 2012), which ultimately may positively affect the organization’s competitive advantage. Therefore, such employees are particularly welcomed in the challenging and complex hospitality environment (Jang and George, 2012), and further research on polychronicity is strongly needed.

3. Development of Hypotheses

Based on the relevant literature and previous results, this study develops and tests a research model that investigates relationships between polychronicity (PCH_Y) and employees’ personal accomplishments (P_ACM), as one of the burnout dimensions, and analyzes its relationships with creativity (CR_Y) and job performance (J_P) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Research model



Note: (PCH_Y) polychronicity; (P_ACM) personal accomplishments; (CR_Y) creativity; (J_P) job performance.

Source: Own work.

Job burnout is described as a “prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job” (Maslach *et al.*, 2001, p. 397). It is a

multidimensional concept composed of three sub-constructs, namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment (Kim *et al.*, 2007). High scores on emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and low on personal accomplishments indicate high burnout (Iverson *et al.*, 1998; Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004). Diminished personal accomplishment is defined as a tendency to assess oneself negatively due to failure to achieve results (Kim *et al.*, 2007), particularly as concerns one's work with clients or interactions with people at work (Özbağ, *et al.*, 2014). It is characterized by low self-efficacy, lack of achievements and feelings of incompetency (Chen and Chen, 2012; Kim *et al.*, 2009). Such employees feel unhappy about themselves and are dissatisfied with their accomplishments on the job (Maslach and Jackson, 1981).

Polychronic employees, due to their effective time use, are able to manage their hotel work demands successfully and perceive them rather as challenging than stressful. As Chu *et al.* (2012, p. 912) underlined "If there is a good fit between personality and job characteristics, employees experience more emotional harmony than emotional dissonance". Such employees may experience above-average levels of well-being and happiness at their workplace, and consequently, they can be more energetic and more likely to invest their effort in their work (Bakker and Demerouti, 2009), which may promote their job and increase their self-evaluation. Thus, it can be stated that polychronic employees may feel much more competent and successful in their work, having numerous achievements.

Therefore, based on the theoretical framework of the P-J fit theory and taking into consideration the results of previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: There is a positive relationship between polychronicity and hotel employees' personal accomplishment.

Personal accomplishment that refers to work-related fulfillment may lead to many positive outcomes, such as increased employees' job satisfaction or decreased absenteeism (Iverson *et al.*, 1998). Also in the hospitality setting, it has been proved that personal accomplishment has a significant impact on job satisfaction (Lee and Ok, 2012) and employees' service-orientation toward customers (Lee and Ok, 2015). It is underlined that employees who are driven by a sense of personal satisfaction and fulfillment are predominantly intrinsically motivated (Amabile, 1997; Wong and Ladkin, 2008). Following the Intrinsic Motivation Principle of Creativity (Amabile, 1997; 1998), it is primarily conducive for individual's creativity (Wong and Ladkin, 2008). Intrinsic motivation is defined as a passion, interest or internal desire to do something (Amabile, 1998). It also refers to employee's feeling of competence stemming from doing the job (Araslı *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, employees who positively evaluate themselves, who feel successful and competent at their work may be more likely to "come up with new and better ways of doing things", thus manifesting their creativity (Zhou and George, 2001, p. 682). This is particularly important in the context of frontline hotel employees, as being close to their guests,

they can easily observe changing customer needs and have an opportunity to recommend new ways of improving the process of delivering services (Raub, 2008). Thus, based on above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: There is a positive relationship between hotel employees' personal accomplishment and their creativity.

By contrast, a reduction of personal accomplishment has both physical and emotional negative effects (Kang *et al.*, 2010) in the form of lower quality of work and feeling worse because of it (Kang *et al.*, 2010). For example, in a study by Karatepe and Uludag (2008b) among frontline hotel employees in Northern Cyprus, it has been revealed that diminished personal accomplishment had a significant and negative effect on employees' job performance. On the other hand, positive self-evaluation may lead to many positive outcomes at the workplace. For instance, employees' conviction of their own skills, capabilities or expertise can be a critical predictor of their successful service performance (Lee, 2014). Therefore, based on above, the following hypothesis is put forward:

H3. There is positive relationship between hotel employees' personal accomplishment and their job performance.

4. Research Methodology

Data collection procedure and respondents' profile:

The research was conducted among frontline employees working in hotels located in the Pomeranian Voivodeship, which is a very attractive and well-known tourist destination in Northern Poland (Gospodarka turystyczna...2018). They were selected as the study sample because of their availability and based on previous cooperation and/or familiarity between the researcher and management of these hotels (Kim, 2008; Lam and Chen, 2012).

Four- and five-star hotels were chosen as the research target in this study since, according to the Polish administrative regulation, hotels of this standard represent full-service establishments with a variety of operational departments required to provide guests with a wide range of additional services (e.g., restaurant and banquets services fitness and conference facilities), demanding personal interactions (Rozporządzenie Ministra Gospodarki i Pracy z dnia 19 sierpnia, 2004). Thus, greater access to contact employees was possible. Additionally, data collected from various departments may reduce a single-department bias, in this way supporting external validity of the study (Chang and Teng, 2017).

Management of all of these hotels were contacted prior to data collection, and permission was granted. All the surveyed hotel employees worked in contact positions; thus, they had frequent face-to-face and voice-to-voice interactions with hotel guests.

According to the information received from hotel managers of the participating hotels, the total number of employees working in contact position was 132, therefore, the same number of self-administrated questionnaires was distributed to hotels in packages including a cover letter and return envelopes. Academic purposes of the research were explained to the employees, and they were assured that their participation in this study was voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Finally, 100 complete and valid surveys were received and analyzed in this study, yielding a response rate of 75.76%.

The majority of the respondents were female (72%). Slightly over half (52%) were under 30 years old; 29% were within the age range of 31–40 years, and the remaining ones (19%) were older than 40 years. Regarding education, most of the respondents declared a university degree (49%) or indicated secondary school education (43%). The rest (8%) declared primary or vocational education. Most of the investigated group (55%) had working experience in the hospitality industry of no longer than 5 years; a quarter of the respondents (25%) had been working in the industry between 6 and 10 years, and the remaining subjects (20%) had more than 10 years of working experience in hospitality.

Measurement:

Constructs used in this study (Figure 1) were operationalized using well-established multiple-item scales that were obtained from the relevant literature and have received considerable empirical attention in previous research.

As literature underlines, two standard scales are commonly used by researchers to assess polychronicity (König and Waller, 2010) because of their relatively high internal consistency (Zhang *et al.*, 2005). These are the Inventory of Polychronic Values (IPV, Bluedorn *et al.*, 1999) and the Modified Polychronic Attitude Index 3 (MPAI3; Lindquist *et al.*, 2001). Accordingly to previous research (Zhang *et al.*, 2005), in this study, the MPAI3 scale was used to assess polychronicity (PCH_Y). A sample item is: “I like to juggle several activities at the same time.”

Personal accomplishment (P_ACM) was assessed via 3 items adapted from Iverson *et al.* (1998), who operationalized the components of burnout in their study, using an abridged scale from Maslach and Jackson (1981). An examples item is: “I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.”

Creativity (CR_Y) was measured via 3 items adapted from Oldham and Cummings (1996) and Wang *et al.* (2014). The latter authors conducted their research among hotel employees in Taiwan. However, in this study, in contrast to the above, employees self-assessed their creativity, not supervisors. As the literature emphasizes, employees' reports on their own creativity can be more nuanced than those of their supervisors as employees seem to be much more aware of contextual information influencing their performance. Likewise, supervisors may not be aware of their

employees' various innovative activities (Kim *et al.*, 2009). A sample item is: "I often come up with original and practical ideas to improve performance."

Job performance (J_P) was measured by two items in line with Øgaard *et al.* (2008), who adapted them from Singh *et al.* (1996) and conducted their research among hotel employees in Norway. An example item is: "Compared to other employees in the hotel industry, I do a good job." Employees were asked to rate their performance against their co-workers and hospitality employees in general (Øgaard *et al.*, 2008). It is worth underlying that comparing the quality of one's own work with others' work provides an important standard for evaluating performance (Babin and Boles, 1996). Moreover, although self-report data might bring biased results (Chen *et al.*, 2014; Lee *et al.*, 2016), because frontline employees are expected to deal with a variety of guests' needs and requests (Karatepe and Uludag, 2007), they are the most reliable source of knowledge about customers, their expectations and complaints (Karatepe and Sokmen, 2006). Naturally, being so sensitive to guests' evaluation, their own performance assessment is closely related to that of customers (Babakus *et al.*, 2003; King and Garey, 1997).

Responses to all items were elicited on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The survey instrument was originally prepared in English and then translated into Polish via the back-translation method. The results of the pilot study indicated that there were no difficulties in understanding the scale items, thus no changes had to be made in the survey.

To analyze the study data, a two-step approach consisting of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) has been applied (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). In the first step, the measurement model parameters were estimated using the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and then the structural model was assessed to test the study hypotheses. SEM allows simultaneously testing complex models that involve a number of dependent and independent variables (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012). The literature lists many other benefits of using SEM, e.g., that it works well under the philosophy of discovery and the philosophy of confirmation, and supports researchers in specifying their hypotheses and operationalizing the study constructs more precisely, etc., (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012). Unsurprisingly, it is perceived as "an important tool for producing better quality tourism research" (Nunkoo and Ramkissoon, 2012, p. 2) that opens up new avenues for the research (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012).

The study used IBM SPSS Statistics 26 for descriptive statistical analysis and R version 3.4.2 package lavaan 0.6-3 for confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling (Rosseel, 2012). Additionally, because the data were collected through self-report questionnaires, to ensure that the findings were not affected by the common method bias (CMB) (Chen *et al.*, 2014; Lee *et al.*, 2016), Harman's one factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) and Lindell and Whitney's test (Lindell and Whitney, 2001) were conducted. Principal component

analysis was performed to test all variables in the model. Both using the Varimax rotation and without the rotation, a share of variance explained by one factor amounts to 42%, thus CMB seems not to be a major problem for the data. Additionally, CMB was assessed using a marker-variable technique (Lindell and Whitney, 2001). The test confirmed the results from Harman's one-factor test, showing no evidence of the common method bias.

5. Research Results

Measurement model:

To measure the scale validity, all measures were subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Chen *et al.*, 2014) that was performed using diagonally weighted least squares (WLSMV) (Li, 2016). CFA results showed a good fit of the four-factor model to the empirical data based on a variety of fit statistics recommended in the relevant literature and applied in previous studies: GFI [Goodness of Fit Index] = 0.98; AGFI [Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index] = 0.97; NFI [Normed Fit Index] = 0.96; CFI [Comparative Fit Index] = 1; RMR [Root Mean Square Residual] = 0.06 (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Hooper *et al.*, 2008; Karatepe and Uludag, 2008a; Yang, 2010). All observable indicators loaded significantly on their respective latent variables. The magnitudes of the loadings ranged from 0.63 to 0.99, and all t-values ranging from 7.05 to 19.26 were significant. Additionally, 10 out of 11 standardized loadings were ≥ 0.70 (Table 1).

Table 1. Measurement of the study constructs in the light of CFA

Scale items	Standardized loadings	t-values
<i>Polychronicity (PCH_Y)</i>		
PCH_Y 1	.77	13.24
PCH_Y 2	.77	9.80
PCH_Y 3	.99	19.26
<i>Personal Accomplishment (P_ACM)</i>		
P_ACM 1	.85	10.71
P_ACM 2	.64	7.05
P_ACM 3	.74	9.47
<i>Creativity (CR_Y)</i>		
CR_Y 1	.85	10.82
CR_Y 2	.83	13.54
CR_Y 3	.77	11.19
<i>Job Performance (J_P)</i>		
J_P 1	.86	12.86
J_P 2	.88	13.63

Note: All loadings are significant at the level of $p < 0.001$.

Source: Own work.

Composite reliabilities (CR) and Cronbach's α of each construct ranged from 0.79 to 0.89 and 0.78 to 0.88 respectively, higher than the acceptable level of 0.70 (Bagozzi and Yi, 2012; Nunnally, 1978) (Table 2). The average variance extracted (AVE) of the constructs were between 0.55 and 0.76, which is more than the suggested value of 0.5 (Lee and Ok, 2012) (Table 2). Moreover, the AVE values of the each construct are greater than the squared correlation between the construct and any of the other constructs demonstrating that each construct shares more variance with its measures than it shares with other constructs, thus providing evidence for discriminant validity (Lee and Ok, 2012).

In short, the above results provide evidence for convergent validity, internal consistency, and discriminant validity of the measurement scales used in this study. Means, standard deviations and correlations are also provided in Table 2.

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics and measurement validation*

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Polychronicity	-			
(2) Personal accomplishment	0.442*	-		
(3) Creativity	0.335*	0.628*	-	
(4) Job performance	0.417*	0.468*	0.336*	-
Mean	3.31	3.72	3.58	3.85
Standard deviation	0.90	0.76	0.76	0.88
Alpha	0.88	0.78	0.86	0.86
CR	0.89	0.79	0.86	0.86
AVE	0.72	0.55	0.67	0.76

Note: * $p < 0.01$

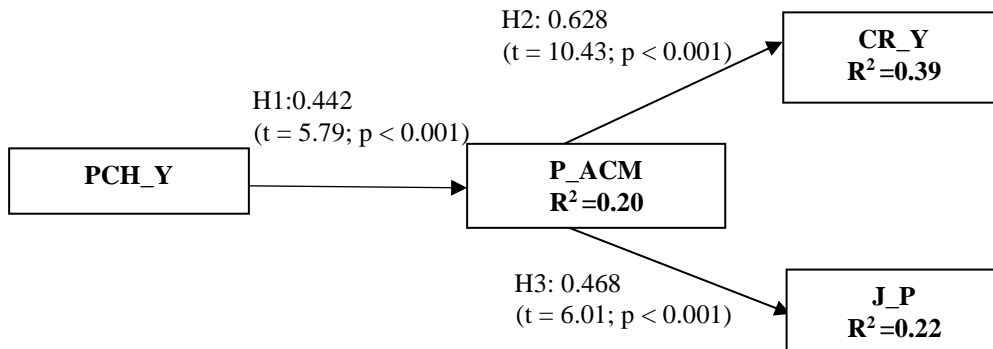
Source: Own work.

Structural model and tests of hypotheses:

The hypothesized relationships were tested with R version 3.4.2 package lavaan 0.6-3 using path analysis. According to the results of the path analysis, the research model fits the data well (GFI = 0.96; AGFI = 0.82; NFI = 0.93; CFI = 0.94; RMR = 0.06). All hypotheses receive support from the empirical data (Figure 2).

Specifically, H1 predicts that there is a positive relationship between polychronicity and hotel employees' personal accomplishment. The results demonstrate that polychronicity exerts a positive and significant effect on employees' personal accomplishment. Hence, there is empirical support for H1. Polychronicity, explained 20% of the variance in personal accomplishment. H2 suggests that personal accomplishment significantly and positively influences hotel employees' creativity. The result concerning the path from personal accomplishment to creativity is significant and positive. Therefore, H2 is accepted. Finally, according to H3, personal accomplishment is significantly and positively related to job performance. Personal accomplishment explained 39% of the variance in creativity and 22% of the variance in job performance.

Figure 2. Research model



Note: (PCH_Y) polychronicity; (P_ACM) personal accomplishments; (CR_Y) creativity; (J_P) job performance; Numbers in parentheses are t-statistics and p-values

Source: Own work.

6. Discussion and Implications

Frontline employees' individual characteristics have become the key resources in enhancing service quality (Giacomel and Raveleau, 2020). This study focuses on one of them – polychronicity. Drawing upon the Person–Job fit theory, this study has developed and verified a research model that investigated the effect of polychronicity on hotel employees' personal accomplishments and their critical outcomes.

Specifically, the findings confirmed that in today's fast-paced and dynamic work environment, polychronicity might be a prominent individual characteristic of frontline hotel employees leading to an increase in personal accomplishment, which exerts a positive impact on employees' creativity and their job performance. This may result from the fact that those hotel employees who have a natural capacity to divide their attention effectively between different customers and their requests may feel much more comfortable engaging in several activities at once, and thus cope better with the demands of their hospitality jobs and achieve more satisfactory results.

Consequently, such employees may feel much more competent and evaluate themselves more positively as well as enjoy greater enthusiasm and pleasure derived from their job. Such employees, high in personal achievement, are more likely to realize their creative potential and perform genuine hospitality jobs. Both creativity and high job performance may finally play the central role in providing guests with outstanding service experience, delighting them and ensuring their loyalty (Wang et al., 2017). This should lead to ensuring the organization's growth and long-term success in today's competitive and challenging environment. Therefore, studies on polychronicity should not be neglected in the scientific framework.

However, although polychronicity can be a significant driver of hotel employees' valued outcomes, research on that characteristic has not received much empirical attention in the hospitality management literature (Araslı *et al.*, 2014; Grobelna, 2019). In this context, the results of this study provide additional evidence on employees' individual characteristics and strengthen the findings of scarce previous research on polychronicity (Grobelna, 2019; Jang and George, 2012; Karatepe *et al.*, 2013) by demonstrating that frontline hotel employees with polychronic time use fit well with their front-line service jobs and, therefore, display valued outcomes. The P–J fit theory (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005) The P–J fit theory (Kristof-Brown *et al.*, 2005) provides a significant foundation for understanding these relationships.

The research value of this study may also result from the holistic approach undertaken towards the study concept, since the relationships proposed in this study have been combined within one conceptual model and analyzed simultaneously in the context of hotel employees in Poland, extending the study results to a new socio-cultural context of Central-East Europe.

Findings of this study also provide several useful implications for hospitality practitioners. Given that hotel work environment is becoming much more challenging, and employees need to be able to adapt to diverse and evolving needs of their customers (Giacomel and Raveleau, 2020), it is vital to understand that polychronic hotel employees may feel much more comfortable in their frontline positions and provide desired outcomes. Therefore, it is crucial to find a match between candidates' individual characteristics and demands of the jobs they apply for. Specifically, as proved by results of this study, it is vital to recognize the polychronic preference in the recruitment process, which should be much more rigorous, and standard procedures should be enriched with behavioral interviewing techniques (Jang and George, 2012) and other effective screening and personality tests to ensure that there is the abovementioned match between candidates and their work requirements and to ensure they are adequately predisposed to work in service positions (Bufquin *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, the current hotel employees might be given referral awards for attracting the best fitted candidates (Karatepe *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, it is important not only to acquire high-quality polychronic employees, but also to retain them longer by providing strategies to keep them motivated to work. Firstly, it is vital to develop emotional attachment between such employees and their organization, e.g., by discussing the career graph with entrants to make them understand how their work aligns with organizational goals and how their unique contribution can support the organization's growth. Such knowledge may also influence how employees plan their long-term career with the organization (Haldorai *et al.*, 2019). Secondly, given poor working conditions in hospitality, it is also recommended to provide hotel employees with fair pay, opportunities for promotion and development, trainings and other benefits that would motivate them to work effectively without demonstrating leaving intentions (Karatepe *et al.*, 2013).

Particularly, effective training programs to enhance employees' skills and teach them how to switch between several tasks in a challenging working environment are recommended under managerial attention (Asghar *et al.*, 2020).

All these practical implications, namely how to attract and retain the best suited employees likely to perform effectively, should be helpful for hotels that operate today under particular pressure of highly demanding environment also resulting from the damaging consequences of COVID-19.

7. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the fact that this study enriches the current hospitality management literature, it has some limitations. As this research was carried out only in selected hotels from Northern Poland (the Pomeranian Voivodeship), it is impossible to generalize its results. Therefore, replicating the study with both larger sample sizes and in different hospitality setting would be beneficial for future generalization. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, causal interference is not possible, thus a longitudinal approach is recommended for future studies (Karatepe and Aleshinloye, 2009). As the data of this study were collected through self-report questionnaires, CMB might have affected its empirical findings.

Therefore, adequate procedural and statistical techniques were employed in this study. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity to diminish social desirability bias (Yen and Teng, 2013). Additionally, Harman's one factor test (Podsakoff and Organ, 1986; Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003) and Lindell and Whitney's test (Lindell and Whitney, 2001) were conducted. Although the results showed that CMB did not pose a threat, future studies are recommended to collect data from multiple sources (e.g., directly from supervisors or guests).

Still more research is necessary to identify strategies or management actions to deal with job stress in the hospitality industry (Birdir *et al.*, 2003). Therefore, further testing the moderating role of polychronicity in the relationships between hospitality job characteristics and burnout dimensions could be beneficial. It would be also be interesting to include demographic variables and investigate potential differences with regard to the respondents' profile. Finally, the qualitative approach to the research methods is also strongly recommended to enhance the understanding of polychronicity.

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